

SOUTH OF THE ALPS



Issue 3

FINANCE NEWSLETTER

Dec 2001

Bravo Detachment, 208th FB, Vicenza, Italy

TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM (TDP): The TDP is for those soldiers stationed in CONUS or those whose dependants reside in CONUS. If you just arrived in Europe and wish to cancel your policy or dis-enroll from the program please contact United Concordia Companies Incorporated (UCCI) at 1-800-866-8499 or refer to their web site WWW.UCCI.COM.

All inquiries concerning enrollment in the TDP must be referred to (UCCI) at 1-888-622-2256.

Finance cannot start, stop, decrease or increase your allotments. These inputs are restricted to the UCCI contractor.

The majority of problems concerning the TDP are caused by incorrect or erroneous information on soldiers Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) file. If this applies to you, check with your servicing personnel office to ensure that your DEERS information is correct.



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MILITARY COMMUNITIES

ITALY: US EMBASSY, ROME

POGGIO RENATICO

VERONA

NAPLES

AVIANO

SPAIN: MADRID

GREECE: US EMBASSY, ATHENS

LARISSA

TURKEY: ANKARA

IZMIR

INCIRLIK

PORTUGAL: LISBON

FAMILY SUBSISTENCE SUPPLEMENTAL ALLOWANCE (FSSA): Some soldiers may be entitled to a payment of up to \$500 dollars per month, authorized in the fiscal 2001 National Defense Authorization Act. This program was designed to reduce the number of service members overseas receiving food stamps.

The Army's new Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance program will only help a handful of junior enlisted family in SETAF, according to the Army Community Service financial counselor and the local FSSA program coordinator. Although only a few families may qualify for FSSA, sponsors should take the time to check into this program. For more details, contact ACS at 634-7500 or visit

WWW.DMDC.OSD.MIL/FSSA

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- 3 SGLI deadline extended for spouse coverage
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Bravo Blaze, Keep the fire burning!!!

Travel Issues

➤ **PAY YOUR GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD ELECTRONICALLY:** B/208th Finance has received an upgraded travel payment system and would like to introduce a new payment option for travel cardholders. Known as "split-disbursement," this option allows DoD travelers to elect a split-disbursement when submitting their travel settlement. Using the upgraded Integrated Automated Travel System, part of the payment is sent via electronic funds transfer to the travel card contractor, and the rest, forwarded directly to the travelers' designated account.

Used correctly, the split-disbursement option eliminates the cardholders' burden and cost of writing and mailing personal checks for travel payments; and reduces both administrative costs and account delinquencies. Travelers wishing to elect the split-disbursement option simply need to determine the amount charged to their travel card during the billing period and specify that amount on the travel voucher (DD Form 1351-2) in block 3c. For more information on split-disbursements or the Government Travel Card visit: [http://www.dfas.mil/money/travel/](http://www.dfas.mil/money/travel/Traveler's Advantage)

Traveler's Advantage:

The SPLIT DISBURSEMENT option is now available for those being serviced by the Vicenza, Italy travel office. This option allows DoD travelers to elect a split-disbursement when submitting their travel settlement. Using the upgraded Integrated Automated Travel System, ***part of the payment is sent via electronic funds transfer to the travel card contractor, and the rest, forwarded directly to the travelers' designated account.***

Travelers wishing to elect the split-disbursement option simply need to determine the amount charged to their travel card during the billing period and specify that amount on the travel voucher (DD Form 1351-2) in block 3c. For example, if \$300 is charged to the DoD travel card for official business expenses and the split-disbursement option is used, the traveler designates this in block 3c as "SPLIT \$300." In the event that less money is designated than needed to cover charges to the card, the traveler is responsible for paying the difference. Likewise, if more money than necessary is designated, the travelers' card account will be credited to cover future travel expenses.

Another benefit now available to travelers is the ability to check the status of travel payment online - go to <https://portal.ssq.gunter.af.mil/tpq2/SSNquery.cfm>



➤ Government Travel Card holders, your SETAF AGENCY PROGRAM COORDINATORS (APCs) located in Vicenza, Italy are:

PRIMARY:	Ms. Veronica Myers	634-7487
ALTERNATE:	Ms. Donna Freedman	634-7257
ALTERNATE:	Ms. Erica Cosgrove	634-7155

➤ **GOVERNMENT TRAVEL CARD--DELINQENT ACCOUNTS:** Delinquent accounts will be subject to salary offset. Cardholders with an account balance MORE Than 90 days past due will receive a due process letter stating that their net pay will automatically be reduced by up to 15% of the disposable income to pay the undisputed delinquent balance. If the balance is NOT paid in full prior to the 120th day, garnishment will begin and continue until the delinquent balance is paid in full. Protect your account and make all payments promptly. Bank of America (BOA) debt collections for non-payment will start to be deducted in December 2001. The first debts should appear on soldier's December LES as a miscellaneous debt. Questions on collections be directed to Bank of America.

➤ **MONTHLY TRAVEL TIP :** Travelers are strongly encouraged to use the new version of **DD Form 1351-2, MAR 2000** when submitting travel claims. Note that the latest version is dated Mar 2000.



ARMED FORCES RETIREMENT HOME:

In your October 01 LES, there was a remark stating the following:

In January 2002, your monthly contribution to the Armed Forces Retirement Home will increase from 50 cents to \$1 to sustain the tradition of providing quality care to our Nation's veterans who reside there. This remark was issued in error as no decision was approved at the time the remark was generated.

CAREER STATUS BONUS AND REDUX: If a service member desires to deposit a portion of their CSB Bonus into the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), they **must** delay their application until **after** their TSP account has been established and payroll deduction has started (Jan 02). All soldiers authorized a CSB payment between Aug 01 and Feb 02 have been authorized a delay in making their election until March 2002 so that they can establish a TSP account.



CALENDAR

- **Midmo Cutoff** 5
- **Midmo NPA distro** 12
- **Midmonth Payday** 14
- **EOM cutoff** 14
- **USAREUR Tng Hol** 24
- **Christmas** 25
- **LES Distro** 26
- **USAREUR Tng Hol** 31
- **Payday** 31



FISCAL YEAR 2002

MILITARY PAYDAYS

DEC 2001-----31 DEC
 JAN 2002-----01 FEB
 FEB 2002-----01 MAR
 MAR 2002-----01 APR
 APR 2002-----01 MAY
 MAY 2002-----31 MAY
 JUN 2002-----01 JUL
 JUL 2002-----01 AUG
 AUG 2002-----30 AUG
 SEP 2002-----01 OCT



Late Breaking News

Military Report.com
www.militaryreport.com

NOV 27, ISSUE

➤ Tri-care changes, lower health care costs for reservists

NOV 13, ISSUE

➤ President signs 10.5 Billion Military Construction act.

➤ SGLI Spousal "OP Out" deadline extended to 31 Dec 01.

NOV 06, ISSUE

➤ DOD expands Imminent danger/hardship duty locations



www.defenselink.mil/news

DEFENSE LINK:

The defense line web site contains a wealth of information on both Military News as well as a broad spectrum of finance issue and information.

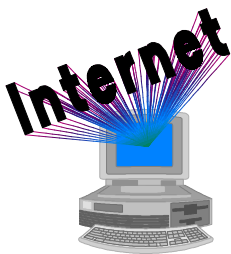
Military Pay

➤ **SGLI DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR SPOUSAL COVERAGE:** Soldiers who do NOT want spousal coverage in the Service members' Group Life Insurance program now have until 31 December 2001 to cancel at no charge. This is a one month extension. Troops who do NOT want spousal SGLI coverage need to visit their military personnel office to fill out and submit a form DD 8286A. New rules effective 01 November 2001 provide SGLI participants with free \$10,000 coverage per child and low cost coverage of up to \$100,000 for spouses. Spousal coverage can not exceed the service members coverage and is limited to \$100,000. Premiums are based on the spouse's age. For more information visit WWW.INSURANCE.VA.GOV **Please note: on your November LES, the new Discretionary allotment (AD) is for your dependant life insurance. Eventually, the system will be revised and will appear on your LES like your normal SGLI deduction.**

➤ **SPECIAL LEAVE ACCRUAL:** The maximum amount of leave that can be carried forward for Fiscal Year 2001 is 80 days (60 + 20). Special Leave Accrual (SLA) Adjustments will now take effect in December 2001. Adjustments to any affected soldiers will take place during December processing month and should reflect on soldier's December LES. If you have any outstanding leaves that need to be charged, it is imperative that you submit these ASAP.

➤ **VEAP TO MGIB TRANSFER:** The OPEN WINDOW which allowed soldiers already enrolled in the Veterans Education Assistance Program (VEAP), to transfer to the Montgomery G.I. Bill (MGIB) CLOSED Effective 31 October, 2001. The new Veterans Benefits and Health Care Improvement Act of 2000 provided the opportunity for Eligible VEAP participants to transfer to the MGIB from November 2000 through October 2001. Please be advised that Finance will not accept any more DD Forms 2366 (Requesting Transfer).

➤ **E/MSS LES VIA THE INTERNET:** To access your LES online via the internet, make minor pay changes, and print your LES, all you need is a PIN number and internet access. Attached to this newsletter is an application to get a PIN number. The web site to pull up your LES is <https://emss.dfas.mil/emss.htm>



ON THE WEB

DFAS	http://www.dfas.mil/
266 th FINCOM	https://144.170.213.77/
208 th Finance Battalion	Http://www.208fb.mannheim.army.mil/
B Det 208 th FB	https://www.d208fb.vicenza.army.mil/
FST Camp Darby	http://www.livorno.army.mil/
Military Pay & Allowances	http://pay2000.dtic.mil/
Finance Regulations	http://131.84.1.34/comptroller/fmr/

MONEY MATTERS

➤ **THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP: Open Season 09 Oct - 31 January 2002**
The easiest and the fastest way to sign up for TSP is via the **Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS)** web site. If you need a pin number, see the application inside this newsletter. Most all of your question can be answered using the Question and Answers section of the TSP web site, WWW.TSP.GOV The most frequently asked questions with the appropriate answer are provided below.

When/how do I make choices on fund allocation?

The individual's TSP account **is not** established until the Thrift Savings Board receives funds. Since the 1st deduction for TSP will not occur until January 2002, accounts will not be established until the deduction is made. Once the account is established, soldiers can allocate their funds via the TSP Web Page, by phone to the Thriftline, or by completing an Investment Allocation Form (TSP-U-50). (Question 14 on TSP Questions and Answers)

How do I get my TSP PIN?

Once the soldier's TSP account is established (January 2002), the TSP will send them an introductory letter and a PIN to the address they used when they established their payroll deductions. Soldiers should allow 2-3 months before they receive their PIN. If a PIN is not received they can go to the TSP web page and request one be mailed to them. This PIN will allow the soldier to view their account and to make changes to how their funds are allocated. (Questions 14 on TSP Questions and Answers)

Are the services matching contributions?

The law allows each service to designate critical military specialties for matching funds. Soldiers serving in these specialties will have to agree to serve for six years to be eligible for matching contributions. To date, **none** of the services are matching soldier contributions. (Question 12 on TSP Questions and Answers)

➤ **CONFUSED ABOUT MUTUAL FUNDS?** Get the answers to those important questions through the 266th Finance Command Financial Readiness Improvement Program at <https://www.266fc.hqusareur.army.mil/> an educated investor is a successful investor.



Buy Bonds
www.savingsbonds.gov



SETAF EURO CONVERSION FACT SHEET

The conversion to the euro will be coming very soon. The twelve European nations that are converting to the euro as of January 1, 2002 are: Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, **Italy**, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, and Portugal.

- **WHAT'S THE LAST DATE ITALIAN LIRE WILL BE ACCEPTED?**

The Italian Lire will be accepted through February 28, 2002. However, vendors will provide change in euro only, effective January 1, 2002.

- **WHAT ABOUT MY LIRE CURRENCY?**

A "free exchange" period will begin January 1, 2002 and extend through February 28, 2002. During this period, the SETAF community may exchange lire currency for euro currency at participating locations. Currently, Banca Nazionale del Lavoro (BNL) and the finance office (Vicenza & Camp Darby) are the SETAF financial agencies that will exchange lire currency for euro. BNL will offer this service throughout the free exchange period (January 2 - February 28, 2002), while the finance office will offer this service only through the month of January. There is no fee for this service.

- **WHAT EXCHANGE RATE WILL BE USED FOR LIRE-TO-EURO CONVERSIONS?**

The exchange rate for lire-to-euro, established by the European Union, is fixed at 1,936.27 lire to the euro.

- **WHAT HAPPENS IF I MISS THE LAST DAY OF THE "FREE EXCHANGE" PERIOD?**

If a customer misses the last day of the free exchange period (February 28, 2002), the Italian National Bank, Banca d'Italia, will convert lire-to-euro currency and coins for the next ten years. However, it's important to note that this is an off-post accommodation.

- **WHAT ABOUT GLOBAL CREDIT UNION?**

During the month of January, Global Credit Union customers can make lire deposits into their Global Credit Union accounts, but Global does not offer lire-to-euro conversions.

- **WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS OF THE EURO NOTES AND COINS?**

Euro notes denominations are very similar to Deutsch mark notes. The notes will be: 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5 euro notes. The coins will be: 2, 1, .50, .20, .10, .05, .02, and .01.

- **WHAT EFFECT DOES THE EURO HAVE ON MY RENT, LEASE, AND OR MORTGAGE CONTRACT? DO THEY HAVE TO BE RE-NEGOTIATED?**

No. The amounts agreed upon in the original contract will simply be converted to euro without re-execution. For more information, please contact the Housing Office.

- **WILL THIS CONVERSION AFFECT MY OVERSEAS HOUSING ALLOWANCE, OR COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE?**

Effective with the conversion, Overseas Housing Allowance payments will no longer be computed in Italian lire, but will be computed using the euro instead. Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) will continue to be paid in U.S. dollars.

- **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ON THE EURO CONVERSION?**

Further information can be found on the European Union's official euro site <http://europa.eu.int/euro/> , or contact the SETAF Disbursing Officer at DSN: 634-7254.

POINTS OF CONTACT

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Employee/Member Self Service (E/MSS)

How to get a (Personal Identification Number) PIN to access the E/MSS

Date

Put a copy of your military ID card here:
picture side only.

Dear Customer Service:

Please establish a temporary PIN for the E/MSS so that I can access my account information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Signature Required

(please print) Rank First Middle Initial Last Name

Social Security Number

Home Phone Number

FAX TO DSN: 312-580-5800 or Civilian: 216-522-5800

**YOU MUST INCLUDE A PHOTOCOPY OF THE FRONT OF YOUR
MILITARY ID CARD WITH THIS FAX.**

Your new Temporary PIN will be set to the last five numbers of your SSN. Please wait **at least** two business days before attempting to use your new PIN (allow additional time if you mailed your request). **You will not receive any notification that your temporary PIN has been reset.** You can try the new temporary PIN at least two business days after faxing your request. Allow more time before trying your new temporary PIN if you mailed your request.

<https://emss.dfas.mil> or 1-877-363-3677 or 478-757-3119

For more information visit the web site shown above or call 1-800-390-2348.

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Newsletter POC: This newsletter is a publication of Bravo Detachment, 208th Finance Battalion. The information contained herein is for the benefit of our military communities "South of the Alps" to include Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Turkey. We hope that you find the information useful and informative. If you have any suggestions or comments, contact 1LT Duaine, at DSN 634-7622 or email damon.duaine@setaf.army.mil

MPS

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Feedback Form

Please take a few minutes to provide suggestions as to how we may improve our service to you.
